



# Totem Lake

## ON TRACK

August 2011



Welcome to the third edition of the Totem Lake bulletin, "On Track." The idea for this publication came from the Totem Lake Symposium hosted by the Kirkland City Council in September, 2010 as a means to announce improvements to the Totem Lake Neighborhood and Business District, communicate regulatory updates, and highlight area businesses. For more information, visit [www.kirklandwa.gov](http://www.kirklandwa.gov) (Search: [Totem Lake Action Plan](#))

## Tapping the Potential of the Totem Lake Business District

### Urban Land Institute Panel Presents Findings

Are current City strategies for Totem Lake "on track?" To answer this question, the City of Kirkland invited the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a national real estate development think tank, to [review city policies and plans for the southeast quadrant](#) of the Totem Lake Business District.

How can this area that contains a lake, rail road corridor and diverse businesses bolster the mall and hospital and contribute to a vital business district? At a public meeting on July 20, 2011 at Northwest University, Totem Lake stakeholders, members of the Kirkland Business Roundtable, elected officials, members of City transportation and planning commissions and City staff, listened to the [ULI Technical Assistance Panel \(TAP\) present its preliminary recommendations](#).

The TAP, comprised of experts from real estate development and finance, transportation planning and commercial leasing and chaired by Al Levine, Deputy Director of the Seattle Housing Authority, largely endorsed the Totem Lake vision of a mixed-use, high-density

urban community. However, the endorsement came with three main caveats:

- Be patient with the economy
- Relax your regulations a little
- And start with a series of public investments.

The economy, panelists said, was the region's most daunting issue. It has refocused much of Puget Sound's new development on Seattle and, to some extent, Bellevue. This was true, the TAP said, for new residential construction, retail, and office space.

"We think there's a lot of potential in the area," said Al Levine. "It's going to take time. The policy decision is do you wait for things to turn around? Or do you take smaller bites, smaller steps. And maybe compromise some of your long-term vision but still do something that fits?"

The time and place is right, the TAP

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### BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT:

#### Macro Technologies, LLC

Macro Technologies, LLC manufactures proprietary quick connects, relief valves, stainless hoses, and shutoff valves for compressed and cryogenic gases used in home medical, transportation and industrial markets. Their products operate in extremes of temperatures (think fire and ice), pressures, and accuracy, and are also used in the emerging liquid natural gas and compressed natural gas markets including alternative fueling.

The company was founded in southern California by Howard Konishi in 1974. He had grown restless working for others, and felt that the training he received in mechanical engineering at UCLA, along with his industry experience would help him succeed on his own. He was right.

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Macro Technologies, LLC  
12530 135<sup>th</sup> Ave NE  
Kirkland, WA 98034  
425.825.8100

[www.macrotechnologies.com](http://www.macrotechnologies.com)

## Macro Technologies

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He moved the company to Redmond in 1978 to be closer to the University of Washington where he was collaborating on development projects. The company outgrew its facilities and moved to Totem Square Business Park in 1982. Continued growth and the end of its lease prompted Macro Technologies to search for a new home in 2010.



Staying in Totem Lake was important to Howard Konishi and company president Ed Huncovsky. It meant remaining close to their homes in Redmond and keeping their 100 employees. Most have been with the company for at least five years. The former Ferguson building, located in the newly annexed area east of the Graham Steel building, was selected as the new site. At 30,000 square feet, it is almost twice as big as the previous building. After extensive tenant improvements, it now contains the company's executive offices, a design and engineering area, and clean manufacturing and assembly spaces. The City and King County worked together to identify and expedite necessary improvements as annexation was taking place, saving the company time and money.

Privately owned Superior Products, based in Cleveland, Ohio, purchased Macro Technologies in 2008. Founded in 1946, the company designs and manufactures a complete line of compressed gas fittings, assemblies, and gas management systems for customers in the welding, medical, beverage, and specialty gas industries. CEO Don Mottinger noted that with the acquisition of Macro Technologies, 60% of Superior Products' revenue now comes from selling into the medical market. ☒

## Urban Land Institute Findings

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said, for lunch-time eateries to expand and multiply. And, if a movie theatre opens in the neighborhood, residents can expect sit-down restaurants to follow. Within the decade, anchor stores, such as Target and Best Buy, should start filling commercial space. And those second-tier anchors will attract smaller retail shops.



"I represent a lot of restaurant tenants and there's a few things that people look for," explained Susie Detmer, a panelist and retail expert with Cushman and Wakefield. "They look for a day-time population within walking distance of basically 10,000 people. We have the daytime population because of the hospital and the surrounding medical uses. So that's awesome."

Rather than wait on the economy and private enterprise, the panel recommended a series of small steps:

- Evaluate and possibly relax some of the zoning and building regulations in the area.
- Get control of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad corridor.
- And do something with Totem Lake.

These are targets the City has been pursuing since last September, when the City Council asked each of Kirkland's departments to find a way of prioritizing the Totem Lake neighborhood. And, City departments have responded: Public works is focusing on the neighborhood's flooding troubles and connecting Northeast 120<sup>th</sup> Street to Northeast 124<sup>th</sup> Street to complete the street grid in that area. Planning is re-evaluating zoning regulations, including the requirement that retail occupy the first floor of most development. And Parks and Recreation is looking at strategies for transforming Totem Lake into a neighborhood and regional amenity.

One of the most important steps the City could take in the short-term is to acquire the five and a half miles of BNSF Corridor that connects the South Kirkland Park and Ride to Totem Lake. Not only could the City use the corridor as a bike and pedestrian path. It could also do something innovative.

"Could this be the region's first dedicated electric vehicle right of way?" asked Chris Fiori, a real estate

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expert with Heartland. "And I'm not thinking Tesla Roadster here. I'm thinking more golf carts. Or electric bikes. Mopeds. Segues." The City has been exploring the purchase of the five and-a-half-mile rail line with the Port of Seattle and King County with the belief that the 100-foot-wide corridor has the ability to relieve some of the City's north-south traffic congestion, provide for an alternate mode of transportation, and, paired with an enhancement of the lake itself, create a destination.

To capitalize on the Lake, the TAP suggested that the City will need to deepen it, widen it, and acquire property surrounding it. It would have to create a central attraction, where children could play or where people on lunch could toss around a Frisbee. A regional attraction, the Lake could be a major recreation draw on the reprogrammed rail road corridor. The effort, the panel said, would require the full force of the City's will. But it could pay off.

"In terms of Totem Lake, we had kind of a go big or go home mentality," Fiori said.

City staff presented the Institute's findings to City Council on August 2. The City Council agreed to revise the work plan to reflect some of ULI's recommendations. ☒

The Totem Lake area has experienced a number of flood events during the fall and winter seasons over the past few years. Development in the drainage basin, natural erosion, and surface water runoff, combined with the growth of vegetation, accumulation of sediment, and other factors along the watercourses downstream of Totem Lake are restricting its natural flow. The City has closed roads in the vicinity of Totem Lake with regular frequency. The road closures have a profound impact on commerce and travel in the Totem Lake neighborhood. Seeking a permanent solution to the problem, a City sponsored capital improvement project will move forward this summer with major funding from the King County Flood Control Zone District's Sub-Regional Opportunity Fund.

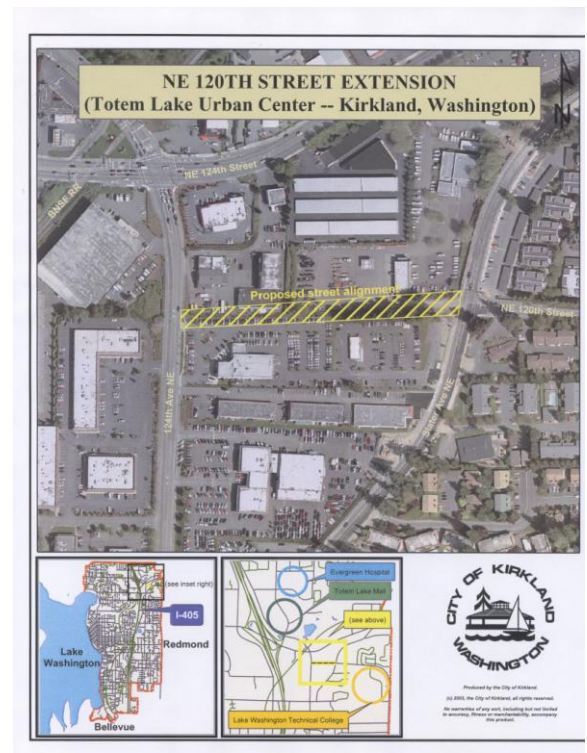
The City contracted with Bellevue consulting firm CH2MHill to undertake a detailed survey of the drainage system from Totem Lake, downstream (and west) to approximately Juanita High School. The drainage system includes piped systems and natural open channels for this Juanita Creek tributary that eventually enters Lake Washington at Juanita Beach Park. Using GIS and survey techniques, the Consultant

See "Flood Control," page 4

## Federal Grant to Help Extend NE 120<sup>th</sup> Street

Many areas of Totem Lake are difficult to navigate because of an incomplete street grid. To partly remedy this, Kirkland will use \$2.5 Million federal Surface Transportation Program funding to extend NE 120<sup>th</sup> Street; a key access road in the Totem Lake area. NE 120<sup>th</sup> Street will connect multi-family and dense single-family housing, business centers and Lake Washington Technical College (to the east) to restaurants and business on 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (to the west).

The current roadway network forces vehicles and pedestrians to travel either north or south, from a more logical east-west route; vehicles are forced to backtrack away from businesses in order to get to where they are going. The Project will expand capacity for several transportation modes to alleviate heavy congestion on surrounding roadways, providing options for walking, bicycling and transit use. This will improve access for businesses, connectivity and promote physical activity. The roadway is anticipated to be fully operational by the end of 2013. ☒



### Totem Lake Business Data

(April 1 – July 11, 2011)

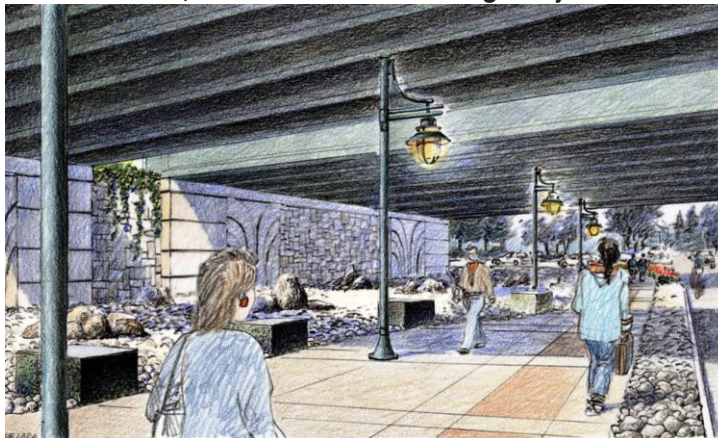
	# of businesses	# of employees
<b>New businesses</b> (licensed by the City)	82	552
<b>Businesses closed</b>	10	30
<b>Net new businesses</b>	72	522
<b>Total Kirkland Businesses</b>	<b>5,051</b>	<b>27,928</b>

## State Project Invests Millions to Improve Access at NE 116th

As a complement to the [I-405 Kirkland Stage I project](#) completed in November 2007, additional improvements are underway at the [I-405/NE 116th Street Interchange](#) which will improve access to and from I-405, as well as provide new improvements to NE 116th Street. The Washington State Department of Transportation is investing \$17 million in the current project, adding to those funds already spent improving congestion on I-405 with the Stage I project. At this new project's completion (expected by the end of 2012), drivers can expect a:

- wider street bridge over the railroad corridor;
- new coordinated traffic signals at 120th and at I-405 to improve efficiency;
- bike lanes east and west on 116th Street;
- wider sidewalks throughout the interchange;
- new trees and plantings, pedestrian lighting; and
- stormwater detention ponds and vaults to help with high runoff. ☒

### I-405/NE 116th Street Interchange Project



Improvements on NE 116th Street under I-405 include better lighting, wider sidewalks, and landscaping. For project information go to [www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects).

## Flood Control

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worked with City staff to measure the water surface level along the Project limits, to ascertain the system and watercourse geometry, and to locate the stream/watercourse channel bottom. The survey confirmed locations of sediment accumulations along the watercourse, the presence of significant invasive vegetation, and several beaver dams. These "stream barriers" along the drainage course are impacting the entire Totem Lake basin.

From the Consultant's findings, two locations along the drainage course appear to be critical and are being addressed immediately; their removal will likely alleviate future area flooding. In association with the Consultant's findings, City of Kirkland Public Works staff is securing all appropriate State permits for addressing these locations.

Location #1 is located adjacent to the east side of I-405, immediately upstream of twin culverts that cross I-405. Due to the density of the grasses and vegetation along this drainage channel, there is a significant accumulation of sediment blocking the flow of water. Working closely with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the City has been granted access through the WSDOT right-of-way west of Totem Lake Boulevard. Further, because the City does not have large enough equipment that can access the drainage from this area, King County Rivers Group will be performing the work under an existing 2008 Interlocal Agreement with the City. The County crews are uniquely qualified for in-stream work, as it is their primary focus for King County - and in addition, they are available to immediately proceed with this maintenance work.

Location #4, further to the west of I-405, is an active beaver dam for which the City has had a State Department of Fish and Wildlife permit for removal in the past. The permit lapsed in 2010; however, it has already been renewed by the State. The activities to do away with these barriers require hand removal of the dam and the various materials used to build the dam.

The Consultant's recommendation is to address these two locations immediately, and the hydraulic modifications may result in minimizing or eliminating the other known downstream barriers. Staff will be monitoring the water level upon removal of the barriers and will also prepare additional measures to remove other barriers as needed and as future funding for this Project becomes available. Initial estimates are that the removal of these two barriers will provide up to three feet of additional storage capacity to Totem Lake. This will become valuable as the next fall and winter seasons approach. ☒

